



**John A. Bishop School
PTO Meeting September 26th, 2011
Minutes**

***** Next PTO meeting October 26th, 2011**

Attending:

Mark MacAneny – Principal

Maria Amato – Teacher Representative (in partnership with Justine Viveros)

Brecky Peabody PTO Co-President

Usha Iyer – corresponding secretary

Catherine Hoffman – treasurer

Alixé Bonardi – recording secretary

Alison Vaishnaw – enrichment coordinator

Regrets: Mary Ellen Aronow - PTO Co-president (not in attendance for this meeting)

Roughly 12 members of the Bishop Community attended as well, including several parents of Thompson 5th graders and Sherri Donovan – Principal @ Thompson and Interim @ Stratton

Meeting proceedings:

1. Introductions: Breck (PTO Co-President) opened the meeting and all in attendance introduced themselves.

2. President's Report (Breck Peabody)

Breck welcomed all and offered several ways to keep informed about the Bishop PTO:

- The minutes of each meeting will be available on the Bishop website. Room Parents are asked to alert parents of their classrooms when the new minutes are posted on the website.
- PTO Bulletin board outside the main office is a good source for all PTO information.
- PTO webpage on the Bishop web site:
<http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/bishop/community.asp>
- School calendar on the Bishop site: <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/bishop/default.asp>
- Note: The Bishop Pennant is no longer going to be published. The PTO info. will be within the Principals News each week - or sent by separate email to the Bishop News, posted on the bulletin board and the website. Bishop news website is monitored by administrator (Mr. McAneny), who approves messages before they are sent.

Brecky presented the urgent need for a **Fundraising Coordinator** - this person coordinates overall fundraising through several ongoing fundraising programs (Stop and Shop, Script, Target) and then oversees community fund raisers from Silent Auctions thru Popsicle sales. Jess Baxter (former fundraising coordinator) commented that the effort required for the on-line fundraising programs is minimal (15 hours per year)

Volunteers are also being sought for:

- School Photo Day Coordinator for October 12th [URGENT NEED]
- Pumpkin Sale October 15th. Abigail Gertner is coordinating this year – would like a co-organizer (shadow) who can learn the ropes for next year.

- Walk-a-thon. A great healthy-school activity (and fundraiser) that requires minimal organization/effort.
- Hospitality - Bake Sales and other PTO events sometimes need a bit of help to coordinate.
- Administrative support (e.g. an hour every other week) to help with backpack mailings the PTO sends out.

** Contact Breck Peabody or Mary Ellen Aronow to get more information or to offer your help in any way.

It has been a great start to the year with several fun community events:

- Ice cream social (great event and we ran out of ice-cream!),
- New parent coffees,
- Bishop booth at Town day. Thank you to Laura Pierce for organizing the booth and volunteers for the day.

3. Budget Report (Catherine Hoffman)

Catherine reviewed the detailed budget (handed out at meeting) of revenue and expenses, as well as pie charts that show where money is spent. Note that this year projected spending is greater than projected revenue because the PTO has brought in more than it has spend in the past couple years and it intends to spend down some of the savings these year.

Revenue: Bishop Bear Fair is the largest fundraiser (Save the date: May 19th). Annual Fund also a major fundraiser. To date, annual fund has brought in \$970.

Expenses: The two biggest expenses are #1 Enrichment (assemblies and other school visits and trips), and #2 checks for teachers to support classroom activities.

4. Fundraising Update (Breck Peabody)

Annual Fund - and Bear Bucks (Ken Lubar)

Ken Lubar coordinates the annual fund drive and it is off to a good start! Over \$1000 received to-date, and hoping for a continuing pace of donations.

This year, the PTO hopes to focus on the Annual Fund, the Bear Fair and the community-building activities, with fewer fundraisers and an effort to boost ongoing 'easy' fundraising with programs such as Stop and Shop, Amazon.com, Target. Fundraising initiatives that the PTO currently participates in can be found at <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/bishop/communityFundraising.asp>

Notes: Stop and Shop: we are doing it this year again, but families need to re-register their card every year.

Amazon: Start from the PTO Amazon link for all your purchases and a % goes to Bishop PTO. (note: if you place items in your Amazon 'cart' without going through the Bishop site first, you can just go back, click on the link from the Bishop site, and your items will still be in your Amazon cart – and a portion goes back to Bishop!)

Bishop-Dines-Out and Shop Wilson Farm will return again this year. These are not major fundraisers but are offered for fun and as community events.

School Spirit (Amy Speare)

Committee organizes monthly school spirit days (wear Blue and Gold!). PTO spirit committee sells Bishop Bear t-shirts.

Popsicle Sale - - scheduled (often on short notice) for warm days. Next popsicle sale will happen tomorrow (September 27th) afterschool in the playground. The organizers will make an effort to make sure that all children, including those who take the buses are included.

5. Enrichment Update (Alison Vaishnaw)

Planning for enrichment events usually organized into ‘cultural enrichment’ (assemblies, world culture, artists in residence) and ‘academic enrichment’ (usually 2 per grade – one supporting social science and one supporting science, although this varies depending on grade/teachers). We usually have a literature assembly or series of workshops with an author.

Enrichment plan for each year decided by the Bishop Enrichment Committee (chaired by Allison Vaishnaw). Alison commented that people should be aware of the general costs of enrichment programs: one assembly for a grade level is \$400- \$500. Assemblies for the whole school often \$1000 - \$1500 or more.

Upcoming enrichment events:

Oct 21st – whole school assembly “Be Somebody” (Rob Surette who is an amazing speed painter and motivational speaker)

Grade level events coming up: ‘Weather’ program from Museum of Science for 4th graders will be in November.

January – planning for anti-bullying event for whole school.

6. Principal’s Update (Mark McAneny)

Principals’ Updates are regularly sent out by e-mail on Sunday evenings – send information to Mr McAneny for inclusion in school updates. This week the Update added a ‘community section’, which can include information about local and community events.

Curriculum nights have gone well – format of grade-level and then smaller classroom break-outs have gone well. Mr McAneny is open to feedback on how this has gone and would appreciate hearing from parents.

Integration of Thompson kids has gone well by all accounts, and the 5 5th grade classes are off to a good start.

Drop-off pick up: School starts @ 8:15. At 8:10 bell, kids line up by grade/class and then file in – necessary to follow the process to create order and maintain safety for kids.

Bus routes are being ironed out, and have caused some minor delays a few mornings. Those in attendance discussed how school seems to start (with kids entering the building) later this year than in previous years. Mr McAneny will look at this in the next few days to monitor.

School Advisory Council: Being formed. There is a two year term available for the school advisory committee – notice about election for this position will be coming out next week.

Technology update: Mr Silvestri and Mr McAneny began discussions at the end of last year about upgrading technology in the building. (e.g. moving from overhead projectors to doc cameras and projectors). Mr McAneny is looking at identifying sources and resources (private companies and grants). Interested in forming PTO grant liaison group that could generate ideas for grants, identify

grant sources, and write grants. The hope is to have a technology sub-committee for school advisory council that is currently being formed. Plan is to thoughtfully look at needs in the building and develop plan for getting useful and useable technology into building, as well as to support teachers with on-going continuing education.

Oct. 11th: Staff meeting will review student (MCAS) data with data specialist.

Oct 26th: Mr McAneny will present short MCAS district assessment results

New alert system being put in place “ALERT NOW”. It is a phone and e-mail system for timely or urgent messages to get messages to parents all at the same time.

5th grade Science Camp is October 25 - 28

7. Thompson Transition Update (Jane Biondi, Mark McAneny)

Thanks to all for the warm welcome to the Bishop Community. This has felt like a pretty seamless transition for Thompson families. PTO has been meeting to talk about how to integrate with host-schools. The enrichment plans @ Bishop sound very similar to Thompson. This Friday there will be a transition team meeting with Mr. McAneny, Sherri Donovan and PTO members.

Discussed 5th Grade Patrol. This has happened @ Thompson for years and is something that is being integrated into Bishop this year. Volunteer 5th grade patrols are assigned to escort younger grades to and from classroom, and for leadership roles in the school. Mr. McAneny suggested patrols may eventually help to run Den meetings.

This year, Thompson PTO will be doing International Festival in conjunction with Hardy (usually a Saturday in March).

Discussed coordinating Bishop ‘Worldfest’ so the Bishop and Thompson communities can both be aware of (and participate if possible).

8. Arlington Education Foundation (Jane Biondi)

Jane will be the Bishop AEF rep. this year. Information about grant cycles will be coming out soon. November 15th deadline for (small) innovation grants. Larger grants available for programs that have been piloted through innovation grants. AEF also provides systemic grants, currently focusing on the middle school (Ottoson) for the next few years.

See www.Arlingtoneducationfoundationma.org for more information

9. Teacher Representative Update (Maria Amato and Justine Viveros)

Ms Amato offered thanks to the Bishop Community and PTO for ongoing financial and moral support. She will be sharing the teacher rep role this year with Ms Viveros.

10. Ambassador Program Update (Amy Speare)

This year we welcomed 65 new students. ‘Parents reaching out to new parents’. Mostly a phone call to reach out to people to let them know how to get on the e-mail lists and about upcoming events. The ‘count down to kindergarten’ paper chains produced by the Ambassadors are very popular and appreciated.

Recap of Events planned for October:

School Photo Day October 12th. Coffee Pond will be onsite to photograph the school, individually and in class photos. Photos will be taken outside, weather permitting. Photos are taken in the morning. Reminder, we need volunteers (about 3 people to help out, and we are still looking for a Coordinator)

Pumpkin Sale - Saturday October 15th in the Bishop Parking Lot. Wilson Farm provides the pumpkins, hay bails, hot apple cider and Carmel apples. Come down and join the Fall fun! Abigail Gertner is coordinating again this year and will be looking for volunteers.

New business or updates from the floor

Ken Lubar asked re. the date of the chili cook-off. It will be scheduled late January or early February.

Another parent asked Why is lunch so short? In particular, this is difficult for the younger children who may not make it through very much of their lunch in the short time they have.

Mr McAneny responded that they have ½ hour because logistical and space issues have created constraints. This will continue to be an issue that Mr. McAneny and the school team will look at.

Discussion of web-page content regarding the ‘inclusive nature of the Bishop Community’. One parent noted that the language seemed outdated and not very inclusive. Mr McAneny responded that he is working his way through the web site with Alyssa Clossey and will review that page.

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting Wednesday, October 26th 7pm

Minutes by Alixe Bonardi, Recording Secretary.